

ROUTE 66: THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Offering a fresh perspective on the ‘Mother Road’, this cross-country journey takes you from the Golden State to the shores of Lake Michigan. Many people headed west looking for a better life, but some returned east in search of better opportunities, so this route allows you to experience their journey of discovery from a different angle but with all the same wacky and quirky Route 66 attractions and nostalgia you could ever want to see!

Motorhome Itinerary

Day 1 > Enjoy a few days in the greater Los Angeles area exploring places like Santa Monica with its classic California laid-back beach vibe and wonderful dining and shopping options. Santa Monica pier is also the place to get that all-important photo with the iconic Route 66 sign. With photo in hand and child-like excitement that only a cross country road trip can bring, head off to collect your RV from the depot in Carson and navigate east through the freeways of Southern California into the vast Mojave Desert. Your overnight stop is a campground in the town that once saw The Old Spanish Trail and Route 66 pass this way. **130 miles to Barstow** ★ Take the shuttle from the KOA to the silver mining ghost town of Calico. www.koa.com/campgrounds/barstow/

Day 2 > Sections of Route 66 follow Interstate 40 east towards the Arizona border and the town of Kingman, AZ. However, for those that want to detour and extend their trip to the bright lights of Las Vegas for a few nights, head northeast along Interstate 15 and rejoin Route 66 in Arizona. Head for Kingman KOA and unwind in the huge pool, high in the desert surrounded by the Hualapai (Hu-al-a-pie) Mountains. Nearby you can see traces of the pioneer Wagon huts that still mark the Fort Beale Wagon Trail. **206 miles to Kingman** ★ Make a short detour to Lake Havasu and the iconic London Bridge spanning an artificial channel of the mighty Colorado River. Stop at The Powerhouse Visitor Center which houses a good



Seligman

Photo by Elizabeth Villalta on Unsplash



Mr. D's Diner

Photo by Elizabeth Villalta on Unsplash



Acoma Pueblo (Sky City)

Route 66 museum and grab a burger and fries at the neon-lit Mr. D's Route 66 diner. <https://koa.com/campgrounds/kingman/>

Days 3/4 > As you leave Kingman, this is one of the few sections of the whole journey where Route 66 detours significantly from Interstate 40 and heads up through the high desert and into the Hualapai Indian Reservation along the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. This is a memorable part of the whole trip so do take your time and enjoy the scenery. Before arriving in Williams for the night, Seligman is a great place to stop and take a break with its old town retaining lots of historical character. **130 miles to Williams** ★ Enjoy the old town nostalgia of Williams with its old-fashioned street lamps and every other store offering Route 66 memorabilia. Take the train from the Grand Canyon Railway station north to the world famous and magnificent Grand Canyon National Park for awe-inspiring views across the Colorado Plateau. If you get the chance book and take a helicopter tour of the Grand Canyon (definitely not to be missed!) or maybe a jeep or rafting tour! <https://www.thetrain.com/lodging/rv-park/>

Day 5 > The drive from Williams through eastern Arizona takes you through some beautiful landscapes and historic Route 66 stops. Just 30 minutes into your drive you arrive in the trendy mountain town of Flagstaff with its university vibe and many outdoor adventure options. Your next stop is Holbrook and the other-worldly Petrified Forest National Park with its Painted Desert and home to the largest collection of petrified wood in the world. Finish the day with a short drive to your stop for the night in Gallup, NM. **218 miles to Gallup** ★ Visit the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff where Pluto was first discovered and take in the view of the Meteor Crater at nearly a mile wide! <http://www.usarvpark.com/>

Days 6/7 > Today you have a relatively short drive to Albuquerque and we have given you 2 nights here to enjoy all the city and region has to offer. The drive itself is no less stunning though with a

stop in Grants to visit the El Malpais National Monument with its volcanic landscapes and scenic trails. You will also be passing the Continental Divide and plenty of neon Route 66 memorabilia enroute. **138 miles to Albuquerque** ★ Stop at Acoma Pueblo (Sky City), one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in North America built atop a 365-foot sandstone mesa. Enjoy exploring the historic old town dating back to 1706 and ride the Sandia Peak Tramway up to the 10,378ft Sandia Peak for a phenomenal panorama of the surrounding area. If travelling in October, enjoy the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the largest of its kind in the world. <https://www.rt66rvresort.com/>

Day 8 > Leaving the city behind, roll through the wide-open skies and vast deserts of eastern New Mexico. About an hour into the drive and if temperatures are rising, take a short dip in the Blue Hole, a crystal clear 80ft natural swimming hole in the middle of the desert. Your stop for the night is the nostalgic town of Tucumcari which feels frozen in time with its many attractions dating back to Route 66's golden age. **176 miles to Tucumcari** ★ Stop by the legendary Blue Swallow motel, an icon along this stretch of the highway and grab a bite to eat in a local diner like Del's for some real western food. <https://koa.com/campgrounds/tucumcari/>

Day 9 > Today's drive is relatively short by Route 66 standards, and you are entering into the great state of Texas for the first time. Break up the journey at Russell's Travel Center home to a free vintage car museum packed with nostalgia and also plan a stop at the Midpoint Café in Adrian. As the name suggests, this is the exact halfway mark of Route 66 and a great place for a photo of the iconic sign. **114 miles to Amarillo** ★ Visit the famous Cadillac Ranch with its spray-painted, half-buried Cadillacs. Just don't forget your own spray paint! For those brave enough, take on the 72-ounce steak challenge at the Big Texan Steak Ranch. <https://fortrvparks.com/>



London Bridge, Lake Havasu

Day 10/11 > Today is a drive across north Texas and into Oklahoma, which has the most uninterrupted miles of historic Route 66 running from the Texas border all the way to Kansas with many of the original bridges, road alignments and vintage landmarks still in use. Good news you have a few days to explore this wonderful region. Before leaving Texas do stop at the Devil's Rope Museum in McLean (it's more interesting than it may sound!) and the U-Drop Inn in Shamrock which is a beautifully restored Art Deco gas station and café and the inspiration for Ramone's shop in Cars. Just as you enter Oklahoma, stop at the Oklahoma Sign, a classic Route 66 photo op. **258 miles to Oklahoma City** ★ A must stop is at the National Route 66 & Transportation Museum in Elk City and the famous Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton, regularly voted one of the best on the whole route for its interactive exhibits and vintage cars. For a night out in Oklahoma City, visit Bricktown with its lovely bars and canal walk. Spend some time at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, regularly voted one of the best in the country for learning about the old west and cowboy culture. <https://koa.com/campgrounds/oklahoma-city/>

Day 12 > Just a short drive today, certainly by Route 66 standards to the other major city in Oklahoma, Tulsa. Again, this day is absolutely filled with so many great options to experience different Route 66 attractions. Take your pick from Pops 66 Soda Ranch in Arcadia with its 66-foot-tall neon soda bottle selling over 700 types of soda, to the Rock Café in Stroud with its historic Route 66 diner from 1939 and the inspiration for "Sally" in Cars. **106 miles to Tulsa** ★ In the city enjoy a night out in the Blue Dome District, a lovely entertainment area named after a historic 1920's gas station with its great food, breweries and Route 66 history or enjoy a walk along The Gathering Place. A world-class riverfront park in the heart of the city and along the Arkansas River. <https://www.travelok.com/state-parks/keystone-state-park>

Above: Photo by Jametlene Reskp on Unsplash

Above: Photo by Joe Chester on Unsplash



Meramec Caves

Day 13 > The scenery starts to change in eastern Oklahoma from the desert landscape to more lush green fields and open farmland. Not long after leaving Tulsa, one of the most iconic Route 66 roadside attractions comes into sight in the form of the Blue Whale of Catoosa! This huge and frankly bizarre attraction is worth a stop. Most of today's driving is off the main Interstate allowing you to really enjoy what it must have been like for those making the journey westwards 100 years ago. You will make a visit through Kansas before stopping for the night in Springfield, MO. **181 miles to Springfield** ★ In Galena, stop at the funky Galena Mining and Historical Museum for a glimpse of what it was like in the 1920's heyday. Visit the History Museum on the Square in Springfield to learn about its role in Route 66 and the Wild West. <https://koa.com/campgrounds/springfield-route-66/>

Days 14/ 15 > Today's drive is largely spent on Interstate 44 heading northeast towards St Louis but this is quite a rugged part of the drive through

the upland Ozark mountains offering a very scenic view from the window as the route skirts the Mark Twain National Forest. You have a full day to explore St Louis, the 'Gateway to the West'. **216 miles to St Louis** ★ Do stop at the Meramec Caves, one of the most enjoyable and charming roadside attractions along the entire Mother Road. Route 66 State Park also offers scenic trails along the Meramec River. No visit to St Louis is complete without a ride to the top of the Gateway Arch, one of the tallest structures in the country. <https://koa.com/campgrounds/st-louis-ne/>

Day 16 > It is a relatively short drive today to Springfield, IL but this allows you to enjoy some Route 66 attractions and other worthwhile stops. None more so than the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cahokia Mounds just east of St Louis with its ancient Native American earthen mounds. Also stop and take a walk or bike ride across the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, an historic Route 66 bridge over the Mississippi River. **98 miles to Springfield** ★ Who doesn't want to stop and see the World's largest Catsup Bottle in Collinsville or a giant pink elephant statue in Livingston. All part of a day along Route 66! When in Springfield, stop at the Cozy Dog Drive-in, the birthplace of the corn dog, a must-try Route 66 classic. <https://koa.com/campgrounds/springfield/>

Day 17 > Before leaving Springfield, we would certainly suggest stopping at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site to learn about one of the most important and iconic figures in the history of the United States. For some outdoor adventure,



visit Starved Rock State Park with some of the state's best hiking spots with waterfalls and scenic trails. This is also where we suggest you spend your last night along the Illinois River before returning your RV to the Chicago depot in the morning. **136 miles to Seneca** ★ Stop for a photo at the world's largest covered wagon in Lincoln, IL and for those with a sweet tooth, we suggest a visit the Funk's Grove Maple Sirup, a family-owned syrup farm and Route 66 history. <https://dnr.illinois.gov/parks/camp/park.starvedrock.html>

Day 18 > Make the 70-mile drive to the Cruise America depot to return your RV. Plan on spending at least a few days in the Windy City and enjoy the sights and attractions of one of America's most important and vibrant cities.



Hackberry General Store near Kingman

Journey Details

DEPART	Los Angeles
DURATION	18 days
DISTANCE	2,177 miles



Centennial

In 2026, the world will celebrate the centennial of Route 66, the legendary highway that has symbolized freedom and adventure for so many. From the neon-lit diners of the Midwest to the great open plains and deserts of the Southwest, Route 66 tells a story of hope, discovery and the embodiment of the American spirit. As we mark 100 years of this iconic highway, travel by Cruise America RV to celebrate the past and also keep alive that spirit of the ultimate American road trip for generations to come.

The Route 66 Centennial will likely include special events, parades and celebrations in towns along the highway. Keep an eye out for festivals including live music, vintage car shows and local food offerings. Museums and visitor centers along the route may showcase special exhibits highlighting the history and significance of Route 66. Also look out for highly collectable commemorative centennial-themed merchandise and souvenirs to remember your trip at this special time. Take a look at the links below for great content and ideas for your trip.

<https://roadtrippers.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-RVers-Guide-to-Route-66-Campgrounds-Roadtrippers.pdf>

<https://www.visittheusa.co.uk/route-66>